

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 037358

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EEWT, GE, US

SUBJECT: US-GDR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL

REF: BERLIN 5215

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VINE AND EUR/CE OFFICERS
MET WITH MR. JEROME OTTMAR, ,RESID"NT OF AMTEL CORPORATION

ON FEBRUARY 15 TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON CREATION OF PRIVATE
US-GDR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL. COMMERCE/BEWT
REPRESENTATIVE ALSO PARTICIPATED IN MEETING.

2. OTTMAR EXPLAINED THAT HE HAS KNOWN BEIL SINCE 1970
AND APPARENTLY HAS GAINED GOOD REPUTATION IN GDR AS
RESULT OF HIS FIRM'S FRENCH SUBSIDIARY HAVING CONSTRUCTED
SEVERAL CHEMICAL PLANTS IN THE GDR. BEIL PERSONALLY
REQUESTED OTTMAR TO LEAD US SIDE IN SETTING UP JOINT
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COUNCIL AND OTTMAR ACCEPTED. OTTMAR IS WELL EXPERIENCED
IN DEALING WITH MANAGERS IN STATE-RUN ECONOMICS AND HAS
NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT OBSTACLES AND DIFFICULTIES THAT ARE
LIKELY TO BE ENCOUNTERED IN SETTING UP AND RUNNING A
JOINT COUNCIL. NEVERTHELESS, HE BELIEVES THAT THE COUNCIL
CAN PROVIDE BENEFITS TO BOTH SIDES.

3. VINE NOTED THAT BOTH THE DEPARTMENT AND COMMERCE BELIEVE THAT THE CREATION OF THE COUNCIL WOULD BE A POSITIVE STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. VINE THEN REVIEWED THE DEPARTMENT'S POSITION REGARDING THE CONSULAR AGREEMENT, HUMANITARIAN CASES AND CLAIMS AND STRESSED THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD MADE CLEAR TO THE GDR THAT TRADE OFFICES IN NEW YORK WOULD NOT BE SANCTIONED BY US UNTIL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON THE CONSULAR AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION TO THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM, VINE POINTED OUT THAT GDR ACTIONS CONCERNING BERLIN HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON US-GDR RELATIONS AND IF WE ENCOUNTER PROBLEMS HERE IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR US TO CONSIDER STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, INCLUDING IN THE TRADE FIELD.

4. OTTMAR EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BRIEFING AND SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO TOUCH BASE WITH EMBASSY BERLIN BEFORE AND AFTER HIS MEETING WITH BEIL ON FEBRUARY 21. OTTMAR WILL ARRIVE IN WEST BERLIN SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AND WILL BE STAYING AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL. HE HOPES THAT THE CHARGE AND MRS. POLANSKY WILL BE FREE TO JOIN HIM FOR DINNER THAT EVENING IN WEST BERLIN AND CAN BE CONTACTED AT HIS HOTEL.

5. IF OPPORTUNITY ARISES, CHARGE MAY WISH TO EXPRESS EMBASSY'S VIEWS ON NEED FOR EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP ON US SIDE OF COUNCIL. THIS WAS TOUCHED UPON IN DISCUSSION HERE, BUT WAS NOT EXPLORED.

HARTMAN
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